

BRINE SERVICE COMPANY SUPERFUND SITE

Corpus Christi, Nueces County, Texas

SITE STATUS SUMMARY

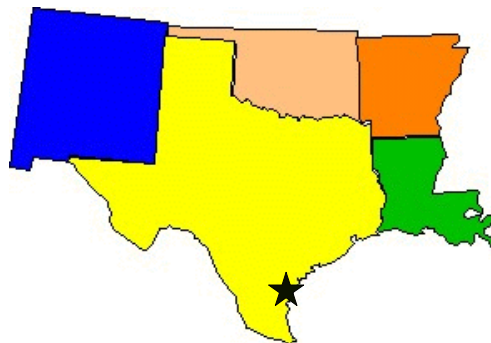
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Region 6)

EPA ID#: TX0000605264

Site ID: 0605264

State Congressional District: 27

Site Status Summary Updated: August 4, 2004



SITE DESCRIPTION

Location: The Brine Service Company Superfund Site (hereinafter “the Site”) is located approximately 6.5 miles west from downtown Corpus Christi along the north side of IH-37 and east-northeast of the intersection at Goldston Road (see the “Site Aerial Photograph” section of this summary). Corpus Christi is situated along the southern Gulf Coast of Texas. The Site is located in the Nueces-Rio Grande Coastal Basin and lies approximately 25 feet above sea level. The geodetic coordinates of the Site are 27°48'55.34" north latitude and 97°30'30.98" west longitude.

Population: The population of the City of Corpus Christi is approximately 277,454.

Setting: The Site is comprised of former waste disposal pits (north and south pits) or areas located on property formerly owned and operated by Brine Service Company. A portion of the pit area reportedly received oil field wastes, such as drilling fluids, and/or refinery wastes from as early as 1946 through the 1960's. The Site was discovered in November 1997 when a pipeline company was advancing an excavation trench through a portion of the former Brine Service Company property to install interconnecting pipelines between two nearby refineries. Subsequent sampling of the pit area revealed the presence of metals, including barium, cadmium, chromium, lead, and mercury, as well as several organic compounds.

Surface water drainage from the Site enters a drainage ditch located along the east side of the property. The ditch travels north approximately ½ mile and empties into wetlands bordering Tule Lake. Tule Lake is a brackish shallow water wetland area and is a Texas Parks and Wildlife sanctuary containing gulls, pelicans, and other aquatic birds. Tule Lake is also a habitat for several State-Listed Threatened Species. Tule Lake flows into Corpus Christi Inner Harbor, which in turn flows into Corpus Christi Bay. Corpus Christi Bay is an estuarine subtidal area and has been nominated into the National Estuary Bay Program. The bay is used for recreational and commercial fishing. Land use surrounding the Site is commercial/industrial. Several petroleum refineries are located nearby.

PRESENT STATUS AND ISSUES

- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is currently performing enforcement actions to compel the Potentially Responsible Parties to perform and finance the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS) currently being planned for the Site. The purpose of the RI/FS is to determine the nature and extent of contamination and to gather sufficient information about the Site to support an informed risk management decision regarding which remedy is the most appropriate for the Site.

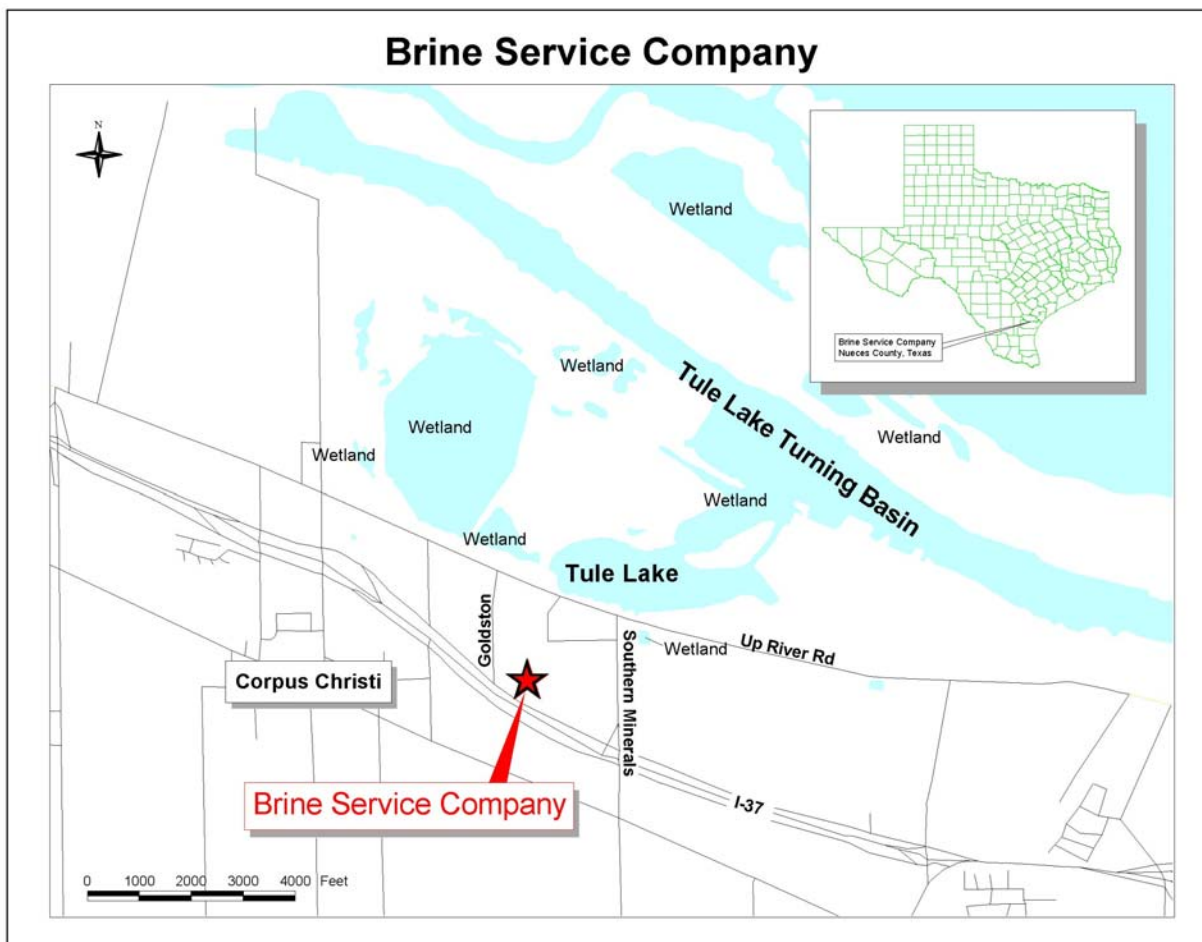
WASTES AND VOLUMES

- The following hazardous substances were encountered during the 1997 pipeline trench excavations at the Site: barium, cadmium, chromium, lead, mercury, fluorene, 2-methylnaphthalene, naphthalene, phenanthrene, benzene, ethylbenzene, toluene, 1,2,4-trimethylbenzene, 1,3,5-trimethylbenzene, xylenes, 2,4-dimethylphenol, acenaphthene, 2-methylphenol (o-cresol), 3&4 methylphenol (m&p cresol), and phenol. Total benzene levels were documented as high as 79,000 micrograms per kilogram. Toxicity Characteristic Leaching Procedure benzene levels ranged from 250 micrograms/liter ($\mu\text{g/L}$) to 1,700 $\mu\text{g/L}$. Total petroleum hydrocarbon levels were detected as high as 52,000 milligrams/kilogram.
- Subsequent sampling in February 2000, conducted by the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (now the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality), confirmed the presence of metals and organic compounds in the north and south pit areas and documented a release of mercury in the nearby wetland areas of Tule Lake.
- The types and volumes of wastes currently present at the Site have not been determined. This information will be obtained during the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study currently being planned for the Site.

NATIONAL PRIORITIES LIST

- The National Priorities List (NPL) is a list of national priorities among the known or threatened releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants throughout the United States. The NPL is intended primarily to guide the EPA in determining which sites warrant further investigation to assess the nature and extent of public health and environmental risks associated with a release of hazardous substances.
- NPL Inclusion Final Date: The “Final Rule” adding the Site to the NPL was published in the Federal Register on September 5, 2002.

SITE MAP



SITE HISTORY

- The Site was discovered in November 1997 when a pipeline company was advancing an excavation trench through a portion of the former Brine Service Company property to install interconnecting pipelines between two nearby refineries. Two pit areas on the Site were originally used as a quarry for sand and caliche. After the pits were excavated, the south pit area reportedly received oil field wastes, such as drilling fluids, and/or refinery wastes from as early as 1946 through the 1960's. There is no documentation on the subsequent use of the north pit area; however, the north pit area is directly down gradient of the south pit area and may have received runoff or overflow from the south pit area.

ENFORCEMENT

- The Superfund Enforcement Program seeks to maximize the involvement of Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs) in the cleanup of Superfund sites. Statutes provide the EPA with the authority to order PRPs to investigate and clean up sites, negotiate settlements with PRPs to fund and/or perform site cleanups, and commence legal action if the PRPs do not perform and/or pay for cleanup. A primary goal of the enforcement program is to obtain consensual settlement or, if necessary, compel PRPs to implement site cleanups. The primary tool used to achieve this goal is the Administrative Order on Consent (AOC). When EPA takes response or enforcement action at a site, the enforcement program's goal is to recover the costs of those actions from the PRPs. Once a PRP(s) has agreed to take response action at a site, the goal of the enforcement program is to ensure that the studies or cleanup activities are performed correctly and in accordance with the AOC and relevant EPA guidance.
- The EPA issued General Notice Letters (GNLs) to several PRPs on June 4, 2002. The GNLs notified the PRPs of their potential liability that they may incur or may have incurred with respect to the Site. The GNLs also notified the PRPs of the potential response activities at the Site which they may be asked to perform or finance at a later date. The EPA is currently evaluating the responses received from the PRPs.
- The EPA issued 104(e) Information Request Letters to several PRPs on June 4, 2002, to learn more about the Site. The EPA issued additional 104(e) Information Request Letters to other entities (not identified as PRPs) on July 5, 2002. The EPA is currently evaluating the responses received from the PRPs and other entities.
- The EPA is currently identifying additional PRPs and evaluating additional enforcement actions to compel the PRPs to perform and finance the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study currently being planned for the Site.

HUMAN HEALTH AND ECOLOGICAL RISK ASSESSMENTS

- Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessments are an integral part of the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS) currently being planned for the Site.
- A Human Health Risk Assessment estimates the current and possible future risks if no action were taken to clean up a site. The EPA's Superfund risk assessors determine how threatening a hazardous waste site is to human health and the environment. They seek to determine a safe level for each potentially dangerous contaminant present (e.g., a level at which ill health effects are unlikely and the probability of cancer is very small). Living near a Superfund site doesn't automatically place a person at risk, that depends on the chemicals present and the ways people are exposed to them.
- An Ecological Risk Assessment is defined as a process that evaluates the likelihood that adverse ecological effects are occurring or may occur as a result of exposure to one or more stressors. A stressor is any physical, chemical, or biological entity that can induce an adverse ecological response. Adverse responses can range from sublethal chronic

effects in individual organisms to a loss of ecosystem function. Only chemical or physical stressors are subject to risk management decisions at Superfund sites.

- Human Health and Ecological Risk Assessments will be performed during the RI/FS currently being planned for the Site.

RECORD OF DECISION ---

- The final remedy (cleanup alternative) for a site is published in a Record of Decision (ROD). The ROD is the official documentation of how the EPA considered the remedial alternatives and why the EPA selected the final remedy. Before a ROD can be finalized, the EPA must provide a Proposed Plan for public review and comment. This plan summarizes the remedial alternatives presented in the analysis of the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS) and identifies the preferred alternative, the rationale for that preferred alternative, and documents that support the EPA's decision.
- A ROD has not been signed for the Site. A Proposed Plan will be presented to the public during the latter part of the RI/FS currently being planned for the Site. The RI/FS is expected to be completed approximately 1 ½ years from the start date.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ---

- "Community involvement" is the name the EPA uses to identify its process for engaging in dialogue and collaboration with communities affected by Superfund sites. The mission of the Superfund Community Involvement Program is to advocate and strengthen early and meaningful community participation during the EPA's remedial activities at a Site. The EPA's community involvement program is founded on the belief that people have a right to know what the EPA is doing in their community and to have a say in it. Its purpose is to give people the opportunity to become involved in the EPA's activities and to help shape the decisions that are made at a site.
- Community Involvement Plan: The Community Involvement Plan (CIP) specifies the community involvement activities that the EPA expects to undertake during the remedial activities planned for the Site. A CIP, based on community interviews and other relevant information about the Site, will be prepared during the early phases of the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study currently being planned for the Site.
- Public Meetings: Public meetings will be scheduled during the early phases of the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS) currently being planned for the Site.
- Fact Sheets: Fact sheets will be prepared as necessary during the planning and implementation of the RI/FS. These fact sheets will be filed at the Site's repository and distributed to people on the mailing list. Anyone who wishes to be placed on the mailing list to receive current information about the Site is encouraged to call 1-800-533-3508. This Site Status Summary can be found on the internet at the following address:
<http://www.epa.gov/earth1r6/6sf/pdf/files/brine.pdf>

- Site Repository: The purpose of the Site Repository is to provide the public a location near their community to review and copy background and current information about the Site. The Site's repository is located at:

Corpus Christi Public Library
805 Comanche St.
Corpus Christi, TX 78401

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANT ---

- A Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) is for a local citizens' group to secure the services of a technical advisor to increase citizen understanding of information that will be developed about the Site during the Superfund process. To be eligible for a grant, a group must incorporate. Also, the applicant must meet a 20 percent matching requirement, which may be in cash or donated services. If you are interested in applying for a TAG, please call Ms. Beverly Negri (TAG Coordinator) at (214) 665-8157 or toll-free at 1-800-533-3508.
- Availability Notice: An Availability Notice for a TAG was published in the Corpus Christi Caller Times on September 24, 2001, and September 18, 2002.
- Letter of Intent: The TAG application process begins when a group of individuals affected by the Site submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) to the EPA. A LOI was received on October 2, 2002. This LOI notified the EPA of the Coastal Bend Bays Foundation's (CBBF) intent to apply for a TAG for the Site. The Executive Director for the CBBF can be reached at the following address:

Teresa A. Carrillo, Executive Director
Coastal Bend Bays Foundation
723 N. Upper Broadway, Suite 411
Corpus Christi, TX 78401
Telephone #: 361-882-3439
Fax #: 361-882-5625

The EPA published a notice in the Corpus Christi Caller Times on October 16, 2002, that the CBBF submitted a LOI to apply for the TAG.

- Final Application Received: A final application was received on February 3, 2003, from the CBBF
- Grant Awarded: A TAG was awarded to the CBBF in May 2003.
- Current Status: The CBBF has not hired a Technical Advisor.

SITE TEAM

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):

- Rafael Abrego Casanova (Remedial Project Manager, Environmental Scientist, Bilingual - Spanish/English):
Contact for “any” questions about the Site and this Site Status Summary;
214-665-7437*; E-Mail Address, casanova.rafael@epa.gov
- Joseph Compton (Attorney):
Contact for “legal” questions; 214-665-8506*; E-Mail Address,
compton.joseph@epa.gov
- Arnold Ondarza (Regional Public Liaison, Bilingual - Spanish/English):
Contact for “dispute resolution,” 303-312-6777*; E-Mail Address,
ondarza.arnold@epa.gov
- Phyllis June Hoey (Community Involvement Coordinator):
Contact for “community involvement” questions; 214-665-8522*; E-Mail
Address, hoey.phyllis@epa.gov
- Karen Bond (State Coordinator):
Contact for State and EPA “cooperative agreements;” 214-665-6682*; E-Mail
Address, bond.karen@epa.gov
- * EPA (Region 6) Superfund Toll-Free Telephone Number: 1-800-533-3508.

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ):

- Alvie Nichols:
State contact, 512-239-2439**.
- ** TCEQ Toll-Free Telephone Number: 1-800-633-9363.

REALIZED CLEANUP BENEFITS

- The investigation and cleanup of the Site will ensure the protection of human health and the environment. Specific cleanup benefits will be identified during the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study currently being planned for the Site.